

**Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry
Forest Management Proposal
Name: SE Home Fuelwood 2015**

Date Posted: July 8, 2015

End of Comment Period: August 22, 2015

Region:	South
Recreation District:	South Coast
Forest Management District:	Southeast
State Forest:	F. Gilbert Hills State Forest
Closest Road:	High Rock Road
Town	Foxborough / Wrentham

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Overview

The F. Gilbert Hills State Forest was selected for a forest management project in order to supply the sustainable production of renewable wood products to local residents. The Ecosystem Services section of the 2012 Landscape Designations for DCR Parks & Forests provides a number of goals that will be met by this forest management project including the sustainable production of renewable wood products, protection of forest productivity, and carbon sequestration through the retention of legacy trees. F. Gilbert Hills State Forest has had similar home fuelwood projects in the past, previously known as the Cut-A-Cord program and has had several commercial timber harvest sales as well. As indicated in the Landscape Designation Guidelines, DCR will strive to include low income families in this home fuelwood project.

The areas were selected for forest management at this time because:

- It offers an opportunity to demonstrate and fulfill objectives for DCR Woodlands. Among these objectives are:
 - The sustainable production of wood products,
 - To continue the home fuelwood program,
 - To provide a market for low quality wood.

The SE Home Fuelwood 2015 Forest Management Project endeavors to:

- Provide local forest products to local residents;
- Protect public safety through the proactive removal of dead, declining, and hazardous trees along High Rock Road;
- Increase growth and vigor on large legacy trees.
- Reduce the import of non-native insects by providing locally grown wood

Stand Description

The F. Gilbert Hills State Forest is mainly an even-aged forest having been cut over in the early decades of the 20th century. The proposed areas for the SE Home Fuelwood 2015 Forest Management Project are mainly comprised of sawlog and pole size mixed oak, white pine/oak, and oak hardwoods forest types. Red oak is more prevalent at the northern end of High Rock Road, whereas black oak and scarlet oak are more prevalent in the more stony soils of the middle and southern portions. Black birch, red maple, white oak, and hickory exist to a lesser degree. The trees in the most northern section nearest to Route 1 are approximately 100 years old. The other sections are approximately 70 to 80 years old.

The soils of the project areas are classified mainly as fine sandy loams with areas of stoniness and rock outcrops. The soils are derived from glacial till. The topography of the project areas are composed of gentle to rolling terrain.

The project areas are 100 feet off of High Rock Road on both sides of the road, making the project area 200 feet in width with High Rock Road running down the center. The project areas cover 22 acres. A small section, 25 feet from High Rock Road on either side of the road, exists at the intersection of High Rock Road and The Warner Trail. This section is approximately 375 feet long and was added to clear leaning, dying, and dead trees from the immediate road side.

Aesthetics, Recreation, Wetlands, Cultural, Rare Species and Wildlife Considerations:

Aesthetics

Existing legal DCR trails will have 50' wide corridors, where timber harvesting activities will occur, and will be designed to promote large-diameter trees, forest structure, forest health, a safe recreation experience, and quality scenery. Slash within 25 feet of forest roads and trails will be managed to result in a light and natural appearing forest ground cover.

Recreation

The State Forest is supported by the State Forests Advisory Council. The council's mission statement is to assist the State Forest staff to maximize the recreational uses of the F. Gilbert Hills, Franklin and Wrentham State Forests.

Cross-country skiing, geocaching, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, mountain biking, seasonal motorcycle riding, and snowmobiling, occur in F. Gilbert Hills State Forest. There are 23 miles of trails. A portion of the Warner Trail runs through the state forest. The Warner Trail is a long-distance trail starting in Sharon Massachusetts and travels more than 30 miles southwest to Cumberland, Rhode Island.

A paved road, forest roads, and hiking trails are abutting or located within the proposed project areas. The proposed forest management project will reduce the number of dead and dying trees that could potentially have an impact to travel on the adjacent forest road. There is minimum impact to recreational activities within the state forest. All work is done by hand with limited power equipment.

Wetlands

The proposed timber harvest areas are not within 100 feet of a certified or potential vernal pool according to the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) datalayers downloaded June 29, 2015 and December 2000 respectively, available from MassGIS. Massachusetts Forestry Best Management Practices concerning wetlands will be followed.



Cultural Resources

Stone walls are found throughout the state forest with portions within the proposed project areas.

Rare and Endangered Species & Wildlife

The proposed project areas are not within priority habitats of rare species as those published in the current 13th Edition of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas (<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/regulatory-review/regulatory-maps-priority-and-estimated-habitats/natural-heritage-atlas-book.html>). Tree tops will be left on site creating fine and coarse woody materials which are beneficial to a variety of insects and for nutrient cycling. Given the limited intensity and extent of the project, no substantial impacts on current wildlife habitat are anticipated. In the near term, songbirds may take advantage of the temporary canopy openings to forage for insects and other foods. Over time, production of acorns and other mast for wildlife will likely increase on retained legacy trees within the project area.

Invasive Species

Risk of introduction of invasive species is low due to minimum soil disturbance. All participants in the Home Fuelwood program will receive training on the risks of spreading invasive species through the movement of firewood. Additionally, participants will sign an agreement to keep cut firewood local.

Sale Layout

Participants in the program will pull up their vehicles alongside the forest road near their respective lots. They will cut marked trees with chainsaws and carry cut material back to their vehicles. There will be no typical landing areas for home fuelwood lots. Only trees less than or equal to 16" at their base will be cut due to the chainsaw blade length of your typical home owner.

Signs will be displayed to make the public aware of the sale area during the project. The state forest has an excellent network of paved and unpaved public and forest roads to easily enable access for this project.

Silviculture

The goals of the project are to provide fuelwood for local home owners, to reduce dead and dying trees alongside the forest road to increase public safety, and to increase the vigor of large legacy trees. Hardwood tree species located within the project area will be selected for cutting due to their potential to reduce competition, increase growth on larger trees, and to increase public safety. Trees that are suppressed, showing signs of decay or disease, and have smaller crowns will be targets to favor remaining canopy trees with large crowns and better form. All slash will be disposed of according to the Massachusetts Slash Law.

Silvicultural recommendations from the GOALS planning process states a Home Fuelwood program could be used to improve the composition, growth, and quality of trees in mixed hardwood and mixed oak stands.

District Forester:

Paul Gregory

Date:

6/29/15

Field Operations Team Leader
Or Park Supervisor:

Willa S. Ashtu

Date:

7/1/15

Regional Director:

[Signature]

Date:

6/29/15

Management Forestry
Program Supervisor:

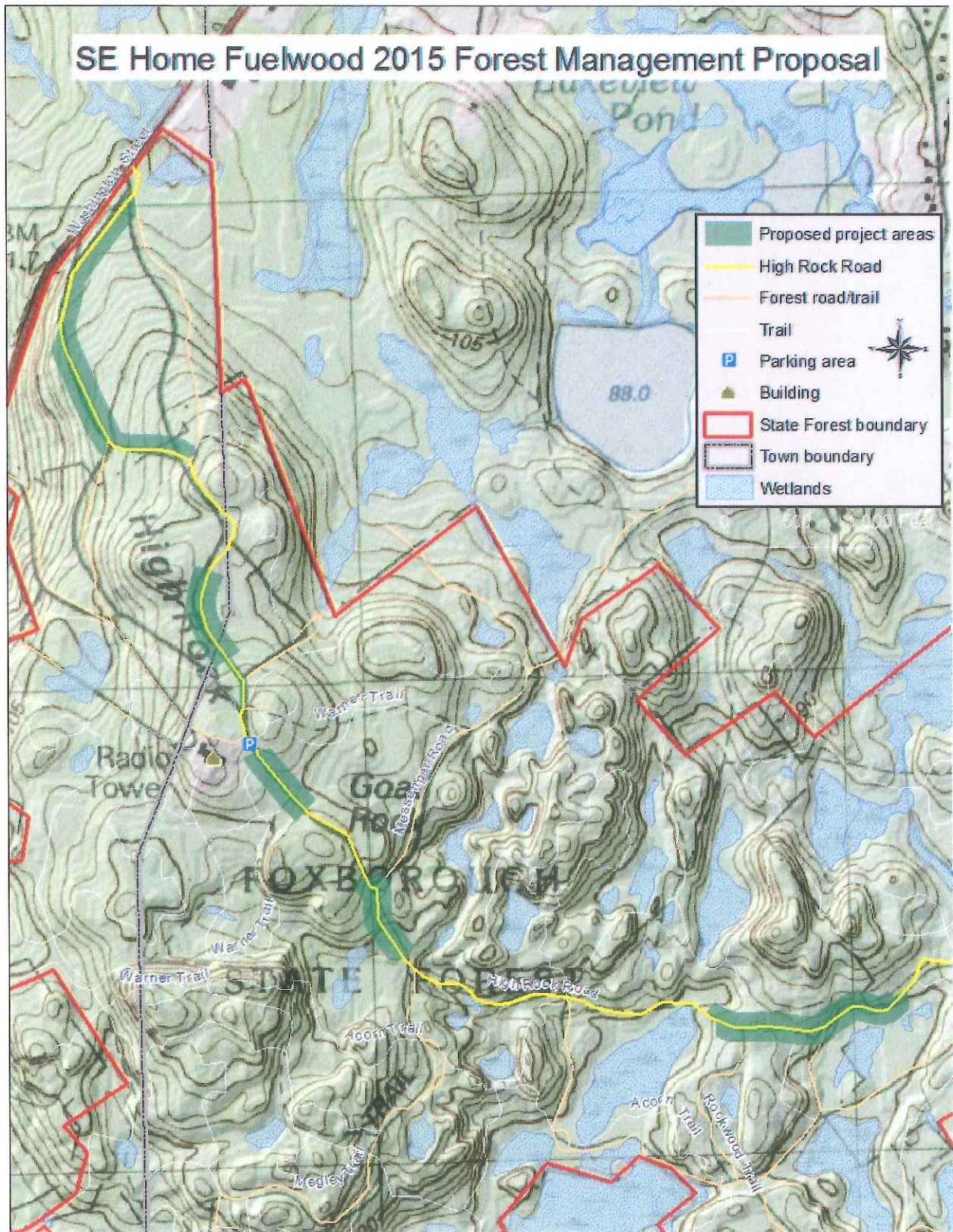
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Date:

7/2/15

Attached: Topographic map showing project details. Locus map showing project location within regional context.

SE Home Fuelwood 2015 Forest Management Proposal



SE Home Fuelwood 2015 F. Gilbert Hills State Forest Locus Map

